

Naval War College Review

Volume 38
Number 4 *May-Jun*

Article 14

1985

Contending With Kennan

Edward L. Killham

Barton Gellman

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Recommended Citation

Killham, Edward L. and Gellman, Barton (1985) "Contending With Kennan," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 38 : No. 4 , Article 14.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol38/iss4/14>

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terizations, including those of Generals William Westmoreland, Alexander Haig, and Jack Lavelle. The latter was the commander of the 7th Air Force who was removed and retired because of alleged falsification of records concerning air operations in North Vietnam. The reader interested in high-level decision-making during the war will find Palmer's discussion of these personalities fascinating.

In the assessment portion of his book, Palmer sets forth some insightful judgments and an alternative strategy that might have been followed. He is critical of US intelligence efforts, especially what he describes as an overdependence on Signal Intelligence. Many of his judgments on American strategy have been said elsewhere: failure to understand the enemy and our allies, giving the initiative to the enemy, and too much faith in the efficacy of airpower as a tool to bring about negotiations. He also has a provocative analysis of the fatal consequences of waiting too long to begin the development of the Army of South Vietnam.

Palmer's alternative strategy would have placed American ground strength in the north, stretching into Laos, to prevent movement of supplies and troops from North Vietnam. At the same time, he would have kept amphibious forces at sea, both as a threat to North Vietnam and for occasional use in the south. Most important, there would have been heavy emphasis on developing the forces of South Vietnam behind

the screen of deployed American power. However, in the opinion of the reviewer, it is doubtful that this would have worked, because the war itself was lost at another level. The contest was one not of power, but of will; and though we had the power, the enemy had the will.

The "larger lessons" with which General Palmer concludes his book are intriguing but can only be listed here: the lack of attention paid by policymakers to CIA estimates, the inadequate organization of the Defense Department to conduct wars, the lack of interaction between the President and his senior military, and the failure to involve Congress in LBJ's major decisions concerning the war.

This book contains much more than I have been able to suggest within the confines of a review. It is a wide-ranging, intelligent, and important book which should be read by every student of the Vietnam War. Many of Palmer's observations require further research, and if we are not to repeat the disaster elsewhere, deserve close examination by civilian and military alike. This book is a first-rate effort by a first-rate mind.

DOUGLAS KINNARD
Lexington, Virginia

Gellman, Barton. *Contending With Kennan*. New York: Praeger, 1984. 179pp. \$21.95

Barton Gellman, who is two full generations younger than George Kennan, has illuminated Kennan's thought with care and considerable

insight in this slim volume. Written in 1983, while the author was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, Mr. Gellman's analysis of Kennan's contribution to US diplomacy is intellectually rigorous but at the same time scrupulously objective in drawing the balance sheet on Ambassador Kennan's views, published and unpublished. Most significant, perhaps, Gellman recognizes that although many of Kennan's writings deal with the Soviet Union, his real subject most of the time is the search for a philosophy of *American power*.

Some of the most interesting quotations in Gellman's book come from Kennan's series of lectures at the National War College and other service schools from 1946 to 1948. A particularly apposite example was his talk at the Naval War College on 1 October 1946, in which he expressed his reservations about and hopes for a democracy which would be capable of the political flexibility and coordination Kennan believes necessary to achieve its foreign policy ends. From that comparatively optimistic high point, Gellman convincingly documents Kennan's increasingly pessimistic view of the capacity of the US political system to meet the 20th century challenges to the nation.

In his 179-page survey, Mr. Gellman explores most of the old controversies surrounding George Kennan's views on the nature of the Soviet Union and the United States, and defends the diplomat-turned-historian against many of the charges

of inconsistency which have been leveled against him. In particular, he comes to grips with the popular misconception that Kennan has radically changed his political outlook, transforming himself from a post-World War II hawk into a Vietnam-era dove.

In fact, as the author demonstrates, Kennan's views have been pretty consistent over the years. Even in his attitude toward the use of military force, where the apparent inconsistency is most evident, a clear thread of continuity remains. Kennan seldom returned to his clear expression in 1946 that a strong and alert military force "is probably the most important single instrumentality in the conduct of US foreign policy." Then and later, however, he stressed that military power did not have to be used to make it politically effective. Also, Kennan did not write off military action entirely and in fact, in succeeding years, he proposed the use of military force on a number of occasions, beginning with Korea and, most recently, in the Iranian hostage crisis.

The reduced emphasis Kennan has placed on the importance of military strength since the 1950s is, moreover, merely one more example of what Gellman describes as his steady inclination to "tilt against the tilt," bringing to bear whatever weight he could muster in order to correct what he perceived to be the currently prevailing imbalance in American conventional wisdom about foreign affairs. It is also true, that even with regard to the doctrine most closely

associated with his name, "containment," Kennan rightly or wrongly has consistently downplayed its military aspect and focused instead on its political and psychological dimensions.

In short, "Contending With Kennan" is an intelligent and non-contentious guide to the voluminous writings of one of America's outstanding scholar-diplomats. It is difficult to quarrel with his final summing up of Kennan's intellectual journey as that of an observer who always saw too much folly and tragedy for his own peace of mind. Mr. Gellman is too intelligent, as well as too modest, to suggest that he has all the answers to the problems posed by George Kennan's analysis of America's role in world politics. He does, however, know a good many of the questions and is not hesitant about raising them in a clear and reasoned way.

EDWARD L. KILLHAM
Naval War College

Jurika, Stephen, Jr., ed. *From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: The Memoirs of Admiral Arthur W. Radford*. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1980. 476pp. \$16.50

Admiral Arthur Radford might have been Chief of Staff of the US Air Force! Probably he would have been a good one. According to his memoirs, General Carl Spaatz one day invited him to lunch and laid a startling proposition on the good admiral. In the midst of the unification debate, Spaatz sought Radford's aid in bringing all military aviation

into a single service—and in return suggested that he would work to make "Raddy" its commander! But Radford turned down Spaatz's offer, and went on to a tough fight in the unification debate and many other things besides. He begins his story with Pearl Harbor and ends it rather abruptly with a discussion of the troubles in Southeast Asia in 1954. The picture that emerges is one of an intelligent man, highly loyal to his organization and a formidable opponent to those outside of it.

Admiral Radford spent several years in the late sixties and early seventies writing these memoirs, and had about 2,000 pages of typescript when he dropped the work in 1972. Dr. Stephen Jurika, himself a retired naval captain, aided by some colleagues at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, undertook to edit that manuscript into the present book. In general, they have done a creditable job and certainly Jurika's expertise in the international relations of the Far East is evident throughout. The editorial staff might have gone a bit further, though, in checking accuracy—given the stature of Admiral Radford and the Hoover Institution. Most of the errors are minor annoyances, to be sure, and do not seriously impair the academic value of the work.

Radford is more candid than the average in the writing of these memoirs. His treatment of his role in World War Two is regrettably short, but in it he does not shrink from criticizing either Halsey or Nimitz